

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

June 23, 2014

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Pazda

A. OPENING

A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 9, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0/1 – Voted in favor, Hagenow abstained. (Ms. Cruz not yet present)

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented three items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

B.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

B.2. Permission to apply for the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant for the FY 14/15 in the amount of \$92,223

B.3. Award Substitute Teacher Services Contract Kelly Educational Staffing Services for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in tonight's agenda.

7/0 - Voted in favor. (Ms. Cruz not yet present)

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, reviewed that next month is the 100 year anniversary of the beginning of World War I. He suggested a graphic novel coming out this spring by Max Brooks on the all-black unit that volunteered from New York. Mr. Stringfellow congratulated the class of 2014. He also suggested articles regarding arts in school and noted Mr. Tyler recently celebrated 25 years in the district. He recommended an article in *Military Magazine* regarding poetry and art in the trenches and the book *College Stress Solutions*. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that the IB Academy in East Hartford was listed as the #2 high school in the state. He suggested an article on Lyme disease in the *East Hartford Reminder*. On CSPAN, he watched a show about behavioral health concerns. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *New African* magazine.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

Mr. Pattacini used this, his last Superintendent's Report, as the time to honor Dr. Kisiel and thank him for his three years with the District. He presented a gift from the Board. Dr. Kisiel brought 43 years of experience in public education to us when he joined the District in the Fall of 2011. He led us on the search for a high school principal, not once but twice; hired various administrators; and hired a new Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Kisiel rewrote countless policies; made changes in response to the efficiency study; worked on the building projects; and helped in hiring a top notch permanent Superintendent. Dr. Kisiel not only stabilized the district, but took steps to prepare us for a seamless transition. He prepared us for continued improvement and success. Mr. Pattacini ended by wishing Dr. Kisiel well in his "retirement".

Mr. Leon echoed the sentiments expressed by Mr. Pattacini, noting the district was going through a difficult time and Dr. Kisiel stepped in and helped. It is bittersweet saying goodbye three years later and he will be missed. Now he has time to work on his golf game.

Mr. Crockett thanked Dr. Kisiel and noted he now knows how to evaluate a good superintendent...a bad golf game = a good superintendent!

Mr. Thames thanked Dr. Kisiel for his service to Manchester Public Schools. Though he hasn't agreed with everything, he often wondered – after listening to Dr. Kisiel's justifications – why he didn't. He noted Dr. Kisiel has moved this district forward and hopes he enjoys his retirement.

Ms. Hagenow thanked Dr. Kisiel for his commitment to our district and leading us on a new path. She wished him the best.

Mr. Stafford met Dr. Kisiel at a Manchester Public School dinner on his first day in the district, and now here on his last night. He has participated in a lot of great discussions and helped him work through issues and Mr. Stafford has enjoyed the back and forth.

Ms. Cruz echoed all the sentiments this evening and words escape her. She is grateful for being able to work with Dr. Kisiel and feels he taught us a lot and she hopes to be able to work with him in the future. She wishes him the best in his retirement.

Dr. Kisiel thanked everyone for their kind words and noted it was a pleasure to serve the Board and the community. Though he plans to take some time off, he will also be overseeing the CT Executive Leadership Coaching Program for Superintendents and also continue to teach at UCONN, along with spending time with his beautiful wife.

D.1. Student Board Representative

Joseph Coyne thanked Dr. Kisiel for his hard work. He recalled that three years ago all we were talking about was fights at MHS, and now it's all about Chrome books and positive topics. He reviewed graduation was held for night school Wednesday at Bailey Auditorium and the Seniors graduated at the Convention Center in Hartford on Thursday.

Mr. Coyne was here this evening to ask the Board to consider having the two Student Representatives hold a non-voting chair on the Board for input on any matters, including giving them backup materials as well.

Mr. Pattacini noted that Mr. Coyne had researched this with other Boards of Education as well and he suggests bringing this to the Policy Committee to consider.

Mr. Leon thanked Mr. Coyne for the request and wondered if he had come up with this on his own or had it been suggested by someone. Mr. Coyne noted that both Mr. Geary and Dr. Kisiel had wanted more input from the student body, though there is student interest in this as well.

D.2. "Power Hour" at Manchester High School

Mr. Geary reviewed that two years ago the high school went to an A/B schedule, with four classes a day of 86 minutes each. He noted that this generation seems to have interest waves of about one hour. He has surveyed staff, parents, and students and the consensus is that the optimal amount of time for classes is 55 minutes. Another concern is how to provide support for students during the school day. Last, it was determined that we wanted to maintain 8 class periods.

Power Hour is an hour break mid-day where students can eat anywhere in the building for lunch and then visit teachers, who will be available for extra help. Florida implemented this plan and a team of people, including parents, teachers, an assistant principal, and students, was sent to Florida to see how the "Power Hour" worked in person. What they found in Florida was that students were engaged, had access to extra help, and had a clean building.

Mr. Leon wondered how the entire building could have the same lunch wave. Mr. Geary pointed out seniors will still have open campus, and many do leave during lunch. He notes not everyone will head to the cafeteria at the same time. Mr. Aldi, of Food Services, is confident this will work and has also suggested the possibility of adding remote stations throughout the building. The new system will start on day one and will not interfere with the Academies. Mr. Geary explained it is just a "pause" in the day for lunch and student support. Mr. Leon wondered if teachers would have time for collaboration and Mr. Geary suggested that might be possible, maybe once a week, to have that built into the schedule.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered if the new principal was on board with this plan. She is.

Ms. Cruz asked how this will be rolled out. Mr. Geary stated the kids would be informed of the rules and procedures on day one. This gives the students ownership of their time and he notes the vast majority of time, when given the choice people will do the right thing. One unintended consequence is that students will be able to each lunch with whomever they choose, and not just whoever happens to be in their lunch wave.

Mr. Crockett wondered about staff lunch and how will they identify when they are available. He likes the idea. Mr. Geary stated they will work on how to identify when a teacher is available, but the kids will know and the teachers will have a lunch break.

Ms. Cruz was curious as to where Mr. Geary had heard about this. Mr. Geary recalled he had read an article in *Principals Leadership Magazine* and implemented it in his last high school, though with only seven periods, instead of the eight we want to maintain.

Mr. Pattacini is excited and feels trying things that have been done successfully elsewhere encourage growth in our district. He thanked the staff at MHS and Mr. Geary.

D.3. NWEAS – Spring Test Results

Dr. Kisiel reviewed this is the third in a series of standardized tests we have given in the district that were adopted because the state does not currently have any standardized testing available.

Dr. Radikas reviewed the scores and the Power Point is available on the website for review. We show growth throughout, though do not always hit the targets. In grade two there are strong scores and we are looking at what we can replicate to show that growth in other grades.

The plan for next year is to support Tier 1 instruction, which is what all teachers teach. There will be additional math interventionists and reading consultants at Washington and Verplanck. There will be monthly meetings with all building administrators with data in hand with the two Directors of Teaching & Learning, Dr. Radikas, Ms. Matfess, and Mr. Geary. There will continue to be job-imbedded professional development and trainers will be pulled one day a month. ELL and other services will be reevaluated and tutors may be moved around, depending on need. Currently we have 3 ELL teachers, two of which are funded through the Alliance Grant. The STEM program will move to a STEAM program, by adding arts to the program. Next year Kindergarten will not participate in NWEAS testing and instead do more age-appropriate activities. Smarter Balance will be coming online soon.

Mr. Leon noted we seem to do better with reading versus math. He wondered about teacher turnover and whether there was a higher turnover in math teachers versus reading. Dr. Radikas reviewed that last year there were 67 new hires and this year there are about 30 new hires. Dr. Radikas also reviewed that elementary teachers do not specialize in a subject like secondary teachers do, but are “generalists”. Dr. Radikas also reviewed the coaching staff may be reassigned depending on their strengths.

Mr. Thames inquired about strengthening the after school programs, adding mentors to the schools, and tutoring.

Dr. Radikas noted that when she came into the district the tutors all had different titles. Tutors will now be receiving the same training and will be moved where they are needed. She has also met with the para’s union to provide more training.

Dr. Radikas reviewed there are three 21st Century Grant afterschool programs already and we are waiting for an opportunity to add two more programs. She notes there is a possibility of bussing students to one of the five programs in the future if there is not one in their own building.

Sharon Kozy works with mentors and Dr. Radikas and Mr. Geary will be meeting with her in July and are looking to grow the program. Dr. Radikas also is looking at other programs, including extended day, Saturday academies and other ideas. She also pointed out the four new Family Resource Centers will be reaching out to parents and providing support. This great concept already exists at Washington School and Ms. Latasha Turnquest will be supporting the implementation of the program in four other schools this fall.

D.4. Summary of Meeting with Board of Directors regarding school projects, critical facility repairs, and security funding

Dr. Kisiel reviewed they had answered questions from the Board of Directors. He noted there were few questions regarding the security issues. A concern was swing space and later this evening we will review some suggestions if a like-new Verplanck is the choice of the Board of Directors. The track proposal and football field inspired many questions.

E. NEW BUSINESS

E.1. Board Bylaws #9000: Section 13 - Committees

Dr. Kisiel spoke on behalf of the Policy Committee, who had listened to the comments made previously and have presented a revised policy for a first reading this evening. The full policy is available for review on the website. The changes made to the previous draft include the Board Chair soliciting Board member interest of committees prior to appointment. Committees can decide on their own chair. Regarding the negotiating committee, Board member interest will be solicited.

Mr. Stafford likes what the Policy Committee did, making positive changes. He likes the descriptions of each committee, so those new Board members can get an idea of what each committee does. He applauds the Policy Committee for this second draft.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the Policy Committee and administration for their excellent work and noted the policy would come back at the next meeting for approval.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Policy 4118

Dr. Kisiel presented revisions to Policy 4118 – Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace, which is available on the website for review. The changes to this policy are consistent under CT statute.

Mr. Pattacini reviewed this Policy will come back at the next meeting for adoption.

F.2. Swing Space

Dr. Kisiel presented four options for swing space if the Directors choose a like-new Verplanck instead of a new building.

Option 1 uses a renovated Cheney building to house Waddell students in grades 1-5, with the Kindergarteners being relocated throughout the district or possibly in leased space. After Waddell renovations are complete and the 5th graders are relocated to Bennet, the Robertson students would be redistricted to Waddell and the other schools as planned, allowing Robertson to be used as swing space during the construction of Verplanck and the remaining elementary schools.

Option 2 relocates the 5th graders to the renovated Cheney building first, then uses swing space in both Verplanck and Waddell within their own building during construction, moving classrooms as needed.

Option 3 creates swing space by investing several million dollars in Nathan Hale.

Option 4 creates space by relocating 5th grade to Cheney and then relocating Verplanck and Waddell students to available classrooms throughout the district, as was done in the Highland Park renovation.

Mr. Thames wondered if Option 4 was chosen if siblings be sent to the same school. Dr. Kisiel stated it would depend on space available.

Mr. Crockett was unsure who makes the decision on which swing space plan is used. Dr. Kisiel felt the Board of Education makes a recommendation to the Board of Directors. Mr. Crockett wondered if we would be able to find out which plan the Board of Directors likes.

Mr. Leon feels we have to let the parents know the plan before the November vote. Dr. Kisiel noted the bussing would be financed through the operating budget, not the referendum. Mr. Leon is against the last option, as it creates multiple transitions, is costly, and students are not always accepted in receiving schools. If it

is safe to build with the students staying on site, he supports that plan. Dr. Kisiel agreed.

Mr. Pattacini reviewed the Board of Directors will hear the plans on the 26th of June and say whether they prefer a new or like-new Verplanck. Then the plan will be developed further.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

H.1. Policy Committee

Mr. Scappaticci reviewed the Committee met on June 9th with himself, Ms. Pazda, Ms. Cruz, and Ms. Hagenow present, along with Dr. Kisiel and Mr. Geary. The policy revisions that were presented this evening were discussed.

H.2. Personnel & Finance Committee

Ms. Hagenow reviewed the Personnel & Finance Committee met on June 10th with Mr. Leon, herself, Mr. Pattacini, Mr. Geary, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance. Mr. Geary shared the Alliance Grant carry-over balance will be used to fund positions that were eliminated from the original 2014-2015 Alliance Grant proposal. Mrs. Brooks shared the proposals received for substitute teacher services. An analysis of the proposals was reviewed and the committee recommended Kelly Educational Staffing Solutions. The Committee discussed contract negotiations in Executive Session. The next meeting will be September 17th.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated Dr. Kisiel on his 2 ½ years in the district. He noted that it was the first time he actually understood the budget! He feels Dr. Kisiel was a good mediator with a soothing but strong presence. Mr. Stringfellow agrees with the proposed Power Hour. He talked about seatbelts and driving safety. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *What's Math Got To Do With It?* Earlier in the month he attended the State Department of Education meeting. He expressed concern regarding students of color not participating enough in AP and Honor's level courses. Lastly, Mr. Stringfellow again expressed his distaste of the term "sub-group".

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary